



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children

Steering Committee:

- American Cancer Society-CAN
- American Heart Association
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- Community Policy Action Team*
- Education Policy Action Team*
- Health, Family, and Child Care Services Policy Action Team*
- Michigan Chapter of the American College of Cardiology
- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development*
- Michigan Department of Education*
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services*
- Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs*
- Michigan Department of Transportation*
- Michigan Fitness Foundation
- Michigan Health & Hospital Association
- Michigan Soft Drink Association
- SHAPE-MI
- YMCA State Alliance of Michigan

September 14, 2016

Representative Al Pscholka
District 79

Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Chairman Al Pscholka and honorable members of this committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important legislation. I am Mike Maisner, a representative of for the Michigan Fitness Foundation. I also serve as Chair of Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, a coalition of more than 200 organizations, all dedicated to reducing childhood obesity in our state.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan supports House Bill 5180, which is seeking resources to help expand healthier food selections in currently underserved areas. Through research conducted by The Food Trust and published in *Food for Every Child: The Need for Healthy Food Financing in Michigan*, we have come to learn that 1.8 million Michigan residents, 300,000 being children, reside in areas of our state without access to fresh, healthy, and affordable foods.

For children, the situation is more alarming when we consider that 32.6% of Michigan's youth ages 10-17 are considered overweight or obese. We know that children who are obese or suffer from other diet-related problems are more likely to be obese and develop further illnesses as adults. As a result, it is imperative that we address this issue immediately.

As you know, House Bill 5180 would allocate state resources to a healthy food access initiative already using private funds to address food access issues in Michigan's most underserved communities. By incentivizing businesses across the entire food spectrum to expand and grow their operations, Michigan can be at the forefront of addressing and reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity. Our state can help make the healthy choice an easy choice.

On behalf of Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, I encourage you to support this legislation, and to continue being a positive voice for the health of our state's youngest residents.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Maisner
Chair
Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan